

NEWS RELEASE

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STATE OFFICIALS PRESS FOR ADEQUATE CLEAN-UP
OF SALT-WATER SPILL

The Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining is urging a Uinta Basin company to take all appropriate actions to clean up the effects of a salt-water spill at its facility near Roosevelt. A containment pond at Water Disposal Inc. was breached Friday, April 9, 2004, allowing a mixture of salt-water and a small amount of oil to travel down an adjacent drainage about one-and-a-half miles.

“A Notice of Violation was issued to the company on April 13th,” said John Baza, associate director for oil and gas. “We’re requiring the company to use the services of a qualified third party environmental consulting firm to conduct an evaluation, and recommend appropriate measures to clean-up any impacted properties.” The company must provide a report to the division by May 12, 2004.

Some irrigated farmland was affected but most of the spill ended up on uncultivated land or ground covered with salt grass and greasewood. The spilled oil formed into balls ranging in size from a golf ball to softball, and they are more prevalent closer to the disposal facility.

When the breach occurred, water escaped for about 50 minutes. Water Disposal, Inc. took immediate measures to stabilize the pond so no more fluid could escape, and used water-hauling trucks to remove as much of the salt water as could be recovered from the adjacent drainage.

Division inspectors have visited the facility numerous times to evaluate clean-up efforts and to assess the immediate impact of the spill. “Although the spill is an unsightly mess, the company responded appropriately to address the incident,” notes Baza. “Water Disposal, Inc. will be held accountable to mitigate the effects of the spill over the next several weeks.”

Produced salt water is a waste by-product from the production of crude oil and natural gas wells. The salt water is commonly disposed of by evaporating the water in large containment ponds or by injecting the water back into underground geologic formations where it is contained by hundreds of feet of overlying rock.

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